

# On tasting...

One element of Scottish culture that I am consistently surprised by is the food. From discussions I've had with Scots, I know this is a relatively new trend and that historically there was not a lot of attention given to innovation in the cuisine. However, as long as I've been visiting Scotland I have had many memorable meals at restaurants that I continue to patronize as a resident – with more being added frequently to my “must try” list. There are many different types of restaurants that fit this bill but the ones that I am going to focus on here are the ones that specialize in “tasting menus”. These menus are updated periodically in order to showcase meat and vegetables that are most in season and are delivered to the patron in courses. It is not uncommon for a meal to last hours as each dish is brought out and presented by the servers. Course portions can be small or even bite-sized, but quantity is not the point here. The talent of the chef is on display and the way they play with ingredients and combinations in new and innovative ways is why I visit these places.



Courtesy of  
Timberyard



Courtesy of  
Timberyard

As the semester comes to an end, we're looking at the Slow Food movement and I realized that these restaurants are practicing this to a high degree. A true collaboration between chef and producer is taking place of which I am reaping the benefits of their talents. In establishments like Timberyard, Heron, and Lyla, a shift to highlighting not only the ingredients but also the producers and the farmers is indicative of this movement (Petrini 2003, 51). In her piece titled *Speed*, Carolyn Strauss argues that the 'Slow paradigm' (of which slow food is a part) is not about speed but instead allows designers a more "robust repertoire" to engage with richness and complexity (Fletcher et al 2016). Even applying that description on a surface level to an experience at any of the aforementioned places, I can recall the subtleties in the components of the dishes. Layers and complexities of flavor are presented alongside details of where the ingredients were sourced and produced. There is also a strong connection to Vibrancy of Matter here as well in the basic sense that acknowledgment of the ingredients, the special attention paid, not only by the chef but also myself, highlights them in a way that is greater than parts of a whole.

On the social side I know that my ability to connect these types of restaurants to the Slow food movement comes from a

place of privilege. Having only begun reading about this movement I might argue that even being able to think about food in this way is privileged. I would be interested to research more on how this might work from the perspective of food insecure people.

Petrini, C. (2004). *Slow food : the case for taste*. New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press.

Fletcher, K. and Tham, M. (2016). *Routledge handbook of sustainability and fashion*. London New York, Ny Routledge.

□

□